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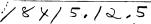
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FROM THE

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BEGUN IN 1858

# THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN

THE

# Diverting History

OF

# John Gilpin

Shewing how he went further than he intended, and came safe home again

Embellish'd with woodcuts drawn and engraved by Robert Seaver



BOSTON & NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN & COMPANY
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
Maccoccu

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Compan, William

#### TO

# Parriet Walton Seaver

FOR WHOSE AMUSEMENT THE WORK
WAS BEGUN AND WHOSE
ENTHUSIASM INSPIRED
ITS COMPLETION



# THE DIVERTING HISTORY OF JOHN GILPIN



# Diverting History of John Gilpin

John Gilpin was a citizen
Of credit and renown,
A trainband captain eke was
he
Of famous London town.

II



John Gilpin's spouse said to her dear,
"Though wedded we have been
These twice ten tedious years, yet we

No holiday have seen.

Tomorrow is our wedding day, And we will then repair Unto the Bell at Edmonton, All in a chaise and pair.



My sister, and my sister's child, Myself, and children three, Will fill the chaise, so you must ride On horseback after we."

He soon replied, "I do admire
Of womankind but one,
And you are she, my dearest
dear,
Therefore it shall be done.



I am a linendraper bold, As all the world doth know, And my good friend the calender Will lend his horse to go."

Quoth Mrs. Gilpin, "That's well said;

And for that wine is dear,

We will be furnished with our

own,

Which is both bright and clear."
14



John Gilpin kissed his loving wife, O'erjoyed was he to find, That though on pleasure she was bent, She had a frugal mind.

The morning came, the chaise was brought,
But yet was not allowed
To drive up to the door, lest all
Should say that she was proud.



So three doors off the chaise was stayed,

Where they did all get in; Six precious souls, and all agog To dash through thick and thin.

Smack went the whip, round went the wheels,
Were never folk so glad;
The stones did rattle underneath
As if Cheapside were mad.
16



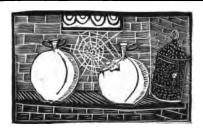
John Gilpin at his horse's side Seized fast the flowing mane, And up he got, in haste to ride, But soon came down again;

For saddle-tree scarce reached had he,
His journey to begin,
When, turning round his head,
he saw
Three customers come in.



So down he came; for loss of time,
Although it grieved him sore,
Yet loss of pence, full well he
knew,
Would trouble him much more.

'Twas long before the customers
Were suited to their mind,
When Betty screaming came
down stairs,—
"The wine is left behind!"
18



"Good lack!" quoth he, "yet bring it me, My leathern belt likewise, In which I bear my trusty sword When I do exercise."

Now Mrs. Gilpin, careful soul, Had two stone bottles found, To hold the liquor that she loved, And keep it safe and sound.



Each bottle had a curling ear, Through which the belt he drew,

And hung a bottle on each side, To make his balance true.

Then over all, that he might be Equipped from top to toe,
His long red cloak, well brushed and neat,
He manfully did throw.



Now see him mounted once again,
Upon his nimble steed,
Full slowly pacing o'er the stones
With caution and good heed.

But finding soon a smoother road

Beneath his well-shod feet.

Beneath his well-shod feet, The snorting beast began to trot, Which galled him in his seat.



So "Fair and softly" John he cried,But John he cried in vain;That trot became a gallop soon,In spite of curb and rein.

So stooping down, as needs he must
Who cannot sit upright,
He grasped the mane with both
his hands,
And also with all his might

And eke with all his might.



His horse, who never in that sort Had handled been before, What thing upon his back had got

Did wonder more and more.

Away went Gilpin, neck or nought;

Away went hat and wig; He little dreamed when he set out Of running such a rig.



The wind did blow, the cloak did fly,

Like streamer long and gay, Till, loop and button failing both, At last it flew away.

Then might all people well discern,

The bottles he had slung; A bottle swinging at each side, As hath been said or sung.



The dogs did bark, the children screamed,

Up flew the windows all,
And every soul cried out "Well
done!"

As loud as he could bawl.

Away went Gilpin—who but he? His fame soon spread around; "He carries weight, he rides a race! 'Tis for a thousand pound!"



And still, as fast as he drew near,

'Twas wonderful to view, How in a trice the turnpike men Their gates wide open threw.

And now, as he went bowing down

His reeking head full low, The bottles twain behind his back Were shattered at a blow.



Down ran the wine into the road, Most piteous to be seen, Which made his horse's flanks to smoke, As they had basted been.

But still he seemed to carry weight,
With leathern girdle braced;
For all might see the bottle necks
Still dangling at his waist.



Thus all through merry Islington
These gambols he did play,
Until he came unto the Wash
Of Edmonton so gay;

And there he threw the Wash about,
On both sides of the way,
Just like unto a trundling mop,
Or a wild goose at play.
28



At Edmonton his loving wife
From the balcony spied
Her tender husband, wondering
much

To see how he did ride.

"Stop, stop, John Gilpin! Here's the house!"

They all at once did cry;

"The dinnerwaits and we are tired."

Said Gilpin, "So am I!"



But yet his horse was not a whit Inclined to tarry there;
For why? his owner had a house
Full ten miles off, at Ware.

So like an arrow swift he flew,
Shot by an archer strong;
So did he fly—which brings me
to
The middle of my song.
30



Away went Gilpin, out of breath,
And sore against his will,
Till, at his friend the calender's,
His horse at last stood still.

The calender, amazed to see
His neighbour in such trim,
Laid down his pipe, flew to the
gate,

And thus accosted him:



"What news? what news? your tidings tell;

Tell me you must and shall; Say why bareheaded you are come,

Or why you come at all?"

Now Gilpin had a pleasant wit, And loved a timely joke; And thus unto the calender, In merry guise, he spoke: 32



"I came because your horse would come;
And, if I well forebode,
My hat and wig will soon be here:—
They are upon the road."

The calender, right glad to find His friend in merry pin, Returned him not a single word, But to the house went in;



Whence straight he came with hat and wig;

A wig that flowed behind,

A hat not much the worse for wear,

Each comely in its kind.

He held them up and in his turn Thus showed his ready wit: "My head is twice as big as yours, They therefore needs must fit. 34



But let me scrape the dirt away
That hangs upon your face;
And stop and eat, for well you
may
Be in a hungry case."

Said John, "It is my wedding day,

And all the world would stare,

If wife should dine at Edmonton
And I should dine at Ware."

35



So turning to his horse he said,
"I am in haste to dine;
'Twas for your pleasure you
came here,
You shall go back for mine."

Ah! luckless speech and bootless boast, For which he paid full dear; For while he spake, a braying ass Did sing most loud and clear; 36



Whereat his horse did snort, as he
Had heard a lion roar,
And galloped off with all his might,
As he had done before.

Away went Gilpin, and away
Went Gilpin's hat and wig:
He lost them sooner than at first;
For why?—they were too big.



Now mistress Gilpin, when she saw

Her husband posting down Into the country far away, She pulled out half-a-crown;

And thus unto the youth she said,
That drove them to the Bell,
"This shall be yours when you
bring back
My husband safe and well."
38



The youth did ride, and soon did meet

John coming back amain; Whom in a trice he tried to stop By catching at his rein;

But not performing what he meant And gladly would have done, The frighted steed he frighted more,

And made him faster run.



Away went Gilpin, and away
Went postboy at his heels,
The postboy's horse right glad
to miss
The lumbering of the wheels.

Six gentlemen upon the road,
Thus seeing Gilpin fly,
With postboy scampering in the
rear,
They raised the hue and cry;
40



"Stop thief! stop thief! a highwayman!"

Not one of them was mute;

And all and each that passed that
way

Did join in the pursuit.

And now the turnpike gates again Flew open in short space; The toll-men thinking as before, That Gilpin rode a race.

**4**I

## JOHN GILPIN



And so he did, and won it too, For he got first to town; Nor stopped till where he had got up He did again get down.

Now let us sing long live the King,
And Gilpin, long live he;
And when he next doth ride abroad
May I be there to see!
42

## ADDITIONAL VERSES AND NOTES

# ADDITIONAL VERSES AND NOTES

The story of John Gilpin's ride was related to Cowper by his friend, Lady Austen, who had heard it as a child. It caused the poet a sleepless night, as he was kept awake by laughter at it. During these restless hours he turned it into the famous ballad. It appeared in the "Public Advertiser," November 14, 1782, anonymously.

A celebrated actor named Henderson took it for one of his

#### ADDITIONAL VERSES

public recitations at Freemasons' Hall. It became immediately so popular that it was printed everywhere, — in newspapers, magazines, and separately. It was even sung as a common ballad in the streets. It has preserved its popularity to the present day.

The original John Gilpin was, it is said, a Mr. Beyer, a linen-draper, who lived at the Cheap-side corner of Paternoster Row. He died in 1791, at the age of nearly a hundred years.

The following matter appears in Moore's Book of Ballads, pub-

46

#### AND NOTES

lished by Bell and Daldy, 186, Fleet Street, and 6, York Street, Covent Garden, London.

["In Hone's 'Table Book,' ii, 79, the following stanzas are stated to have been found, in the handwriting of Cowper, among the papers of Mrs. Unwin. In the opinion of Mr. Hone's correspondent, they evidently formed part of an intended episode to the Diverting History of John Gilpin. They are not given in any edition of the poet's works."]

Then Mrs. Gilpin sweetly said
Unto her children three
"I'll clamber o'er this style so high
And you climb after me,"

But having climbed unto the top
She could no further go,
But sate, to every passer by
A spectacle and show:

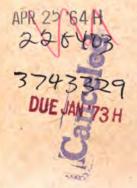
### **ADDITIONAL VERSES**

Who said, Your spouse and you this day
Both show your horsemanship;
And if you stay till he comes back
Your horse will need no whip.

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